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ABSTRACT

A 23-item militancy scale was administered to 100 black college students. Background information and Rokeach's Terminal Value Scale were also given. Using a multiple regression analysis, several variables emerged as good predictors of militancy for the sample. The best single predictor is racial designation, militants preferring to call themselve "Black," non-militants preferred Negro. The second best predictor is the extent to which "Salvation" is valued. On an 18-item scale, militants valued salvation 14th while non-militants ranked it 3rd. Occupational preference is the third best predictor, students preferring science or business being less militant. A fourth predictor is father's education, with the father of militants tending to be better educated. Other predictors were rankings on values of national security, a comfortable life, social recognition, and accomplishment. These were all valued more highly by militants. Both groups valued freedom and equality above any other values presented in the Rokeach Value Scale. (Author/KJ)

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RESEARCH REPORT No. 13

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CORRELATES OF ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACK MILITANCY AMONG BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS

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CORRELATES OF ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACK MILITANCY AMONG BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Of the current major social and political issues relevant to black college students, black militancy appears as the foremost. Black students in both black and white institutions all over the country are expressing their discontent not only with their educational systems but with the structure of the entire society.

This expression of discontent and desire for change is not a new phonomenon for black students. In the 1950's students from black colleges were actively involved in civil rights movement. The tone of the movement at that time was non-violence. The goal was integration, and the methods of protest were freedom rides, marches, sit-ins, and voter registration drives.

The realization of the irrelevancy of these revolutionary tools was first recognized in 1964 when the representatives of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party were not allowed seats at the Democratic National Convention (1). Since then the original non-violent tone of the movement has been replaced by militancy. The goal is no longer integration, but independence and nationalism. The tone is strength and force, and the methods are black unification, racial pride, self-defense, and active destruction, physical or otherwise, if warrented.

Black students of today, as in the earlier days of the movement, are still members of the black vanguard. Contrary to targets of the 1950's protest, active black students of today are directing most of their protest to their own immediate compuses (2). They are demanding more black instructors and a curriculum more relevant to black people taught only by blacks. Although it would appear that black students across the country are identifying to an even greater extent with the black militant movement, the militants compose only a small segment of the black students enrolled in both black and white colleges.

The purpose of this study was to see if militancy could be predicted from certain objective and subjective facts about students in predominantly black colleges. This assumes that militancy is a measureble phenomenon and that those students who differ on that measure would also be likely to have different backgrounds, different interests, and different values.

The subjects used in this study were 100 black students picked randomly from classes of cooperating teachers in the Atlanta University Center which is a cluster of four undergraduate and two graduate predominantly black colleges near downtown Atlanta. There were 74 men and 26 women in the sample, all were black undergraduate students.

To measure militancy a Thurstone Scale, with Likert weights, was devised containing items relating to anti-white feelings, use of violence, integration, identification with Africa, and the multiple factors connoted by the concept of Black militancy. The scale was validated on ten known militants and ten known conservatives. It should be mentioned here that I did all the

testing and was the only contact person known to the subjects. The criteria used for determining who was militant and who was conservative were based on several factors, some of which are difficult to list. Simple identification or membership in known groups would not have served to differentiate the two groups because many militants do not belong to any organizations in any formal sense. I made the discrimination on the basis of attitudes I had heard them express in formal situations, and I felt that I knew them well enough that it would be generally agreed by others who knew them that they were strongly militant or strongly conservative. Even though some of these militant students knew and trusted me there was great suspicion and hesitation on the part of many to cooperate. (It should be noted that militant blacks are reluctant to give information about themselves, particularly to whites, for fear of detection but mainly because of anti-white and anti-scientific biases, and also because of the general irrelevance which social science research has had to the solutions of the problems of black people).

The final scale of 23 items was made up of those items that discriminated the ten militants from the ten non-militants. The minimum theoretical scale score could be 1080 and the maximum theoretical score, 5400. The actual range for the 100 subjects was from 1810 (which means high militancy) to 4990 (low militancy or conservatism).

Our hypotheses about how militant students would differ from non-militant students led us to obtain information about the student's major, occupational preference, grade point average, what year of college he was in, and measures of socio-economic status, namely father's education and

occupation, mother's occupation, and family income. We also asked what state the student was from, the size of his hometown, and his race. The racial designation was there originally to eliminate the forms of the white students, but when the forms were collected we noticed that some subjects wrote "Negro" and others wrote "Black" or "Afro-American" in the blank. We, therefore, decided to include the variable of race, that is "Black" vs. "Negro", in the analysis.

The hypotheses were, briefly, that militancy would be related to social class, that is, the better off his family the more militant the student; that urban students would be more militant than rural students; that students coming from outside of the south would tend to be more militant than southerners; and, that militancy would be roughly related to the degree that the student's major or occupational preference reflects an interest in people and events rather than things or facts.

To obtain information about student's subjective motivations Rokeach's Terminal Value Scale was administered (3). The subject was asked to rank 18 values, listed alphabetically, in order depending on how important they are to him. Because Rokeach had found that the values of freedom and equality were useful in distinguishing diverse groups (3, 4), we were particularly interested in how militants and non-militants would rank these two values.

A regression analysis was used to determine the amount any variable contributed to the prediction of militancy.

An analysis of the results of the study shows the single most significant variable in predicting whether or not a student will hold militant views

was his perception of his racial identification. Those subjects who listed "Negro" as their race were significantly less militant than those who called themselves "Black" or "Afro-American." This variable of racial designation contributed 17% to the sample variance: No other single variable was a good predictor. It is interesting to speculate on what this means.

Certainly it is obvious that the vanguard of blacks no longer identify with the term "Negro" which is considered to be a designation imposed by the American culture upon black men, connoting, among other things a distinction between them and Africans. In the writings of Black Muslims over the last decade, the term "so-called American Negro" is used in an ironical sense. The award of "Negro of the Week" contempuously given to Jesse Owens by the athletes boycotting the 1968 olympics signifies the lack of esteem in which the term is held. It is not suprising, then, that the militant students perceive themselves as belonging to this new, independent class of people - Blacks - rather than the older designation - Negro - which has become increasingly unpopular.

Of the objective, demographic measures, it is as interesting to note those which were <u>not</u> significantly related to militancy as well as the ones which were neither geographical location of hometown, in terms of south, non-south, nor size of hometown, in terms of rural-urban dimensions, predicted militancy for this sample. In general, with the exception of father's occupation, the indices of socio-economic status did not prove to be good predictors. Militant students had better educated fathers than non-

militants. It is interesting to note that father's education correlated with family income hardly at all (11). Considering that under-employment has always been a fact of life for black people in America it is conceivable that some of the fathers with advanced educations have felt the sting of discrimination in hiring practices more sharply than fathers with less education. Tomlinson (5) found that militants in Watts were better educated than the conservatives in the black community. It would seem, then, that the black militants fit the pattern typical of revolutionaries in history - they come from the better educated segments of society.

The subjects' majors and occupational preferences yielded some additional information to the prediction in the expected direction. Students expressing an interest in business and science occupations tended to be more conservative than those in other disciplines. Though science and business are different in terms of their goals and requirements, both occupations have little to gain from an imbalance in the current order of things, nor are the curricula in both disciplines particularly geared to contemporary social issues.

The variables of sex, grade point average, and number of years in college did not differentiate militants from non-militants. This suggest, for this sample, that men are not more militant than women, or vice-versa; that students' ability to do well in courses is not related to their degree of militancy, and there is no relationship between the number of years a student has been in school and how militant he is.

The values of Freedom and Equality on the Rokeach Scale did not prove to be good predictors in this study. The reason is that both militants and non-militants ranked these two values highest on the 18 item value scale. Militants ranked Freedom first and Equality second; the non-militants ranked Equality first and Freedom second. These differences are minor compared to the very close agreement between the groups on the priority given to these two values. To appreciate these rankings it is helpful to look at the values assigned to Freedom and Equality by other groups that Rokeach has studied. A sample of 298 white Michigan State students ranked Freedom 1 and Equality II. In a national sample of about 1500 people over 21, Freedom was ranked 11th by the whites and 2nd by the blacks. It is somewhat suprising that the militant group should value Equality so highly since it is seldom sited as a goal of the movement currently. It is also interesting that a high degree of democratic orientation is evident in the high value placed on Freedom. This is in marked contrast to a sample of 28 unemployed blacks reported by Rokeach who ranked Equality first but Freedom tenth.

The one value scale item that did significantly discriminate militants from non-militants was "salvation." This was the second best predictor after race (that is, Black-Negro) and contributed 10% to the sample variance. Militants ranked salvation 14th and non-militants ranked it third. It could be assumed from this highly significant difference that militants are not churchgoers and are neither attracted to nor influenced by Christian values and philosophy. This may also be related to the differences in backgrounds, between militant and non-militant. Abernathy and King, for example, come

from ministerial backgrounds, while Carmichael, Cleaver, and Rap Brown are secular. There are, however, black muslim ministers like Malcolm X and Muhammed Ali who are well-accepted by black militants. This suggest that it is not religion per se but christianity in particular that is being rejected.

The other values that discriminated militants from non-militants to a lesser degree were national security, a comfortable life, social recognition, and accomplishment. Although all of these values were ranked with low priorities by both groups, non-militants ranked them higher than militants. These findings suggest that values held by religious, patriotic, and materialistic Americans are rejected by black students, to a large degree, they are rejected more strongly by the militants. If salvation, national security, comfort, accomplishment, and social recognition are desirable, the achievement of these ends would depend heavily on going through the established channels - the structure of the church, the state, business, and the academic world, as currently set down by the establishment of these institutions. Self-respect, on the other hand, is an inner-direct value not dependent on the stability of existing institutions but self-evaluation.

To Summarize: A 23 item militancy scale was administered to 100 black college students. Background information and Rokeach's terminal value scale were also given. Using a multiple regression analysis several variables emerged as good predictors of militancy for our sample. The best single predictor is racial designation. Militants tend to call themselves "Black," non-militants refer to themselves as "Negro." The second best

predictor is the extent to which "Salvation" is valued. On an 18 item scale, militants valued salvation 14th while non-militants ranked it third. Occupational preference is the third best predictor. Students who prefer science or business as their occupation tend to be less militant than those in other fields. A fourth predictor is father's education. Fathers of militant students tend to be better educated than fathers of non-militants. Other predictors were rankings on values of national security, a comfortable life, social recognition, and accomplishment. These were all valued more highly by militants. Both groups valued freedom and equality above any other values presented in the Rokeach Value Scale. Militants and non-militants do not differ in sex, grade point average, income of their families, or geographical location and size of their home town. Further research is being conducted to see if these findings can be generalized to black students in other colleges with different distributions of black and white students and in different parts of the country.

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